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EEFOEMER

As for the issue of the affair for the Vizetellys, of whom Zola then knew little, having only had a few business transactions with them, he did not feel deeply affected, for the matter seemed to him to resolve itself into a moderate pecuniary loss which, he imagined, the defendant would be well able to incur, having made considerable profits on the incriminated books.<sup>1</sup> For the rest, when in later years Ernest Vizetelly showed him various newspaper cuttings imputing to him a variety of statements, Zola remarked that some he had never made, while as for others his words had evidently been misconstrued.

As it happened, the affair proved far more serious for Yizetelly & Co. than Zola had thought possible. The firm then had several thousand pounds locked up in illustrated books which were not nearly ready for publication. The sales of its existing books had been declining for several months, so that its receipts had become small, though its expenses remained heavy and it had liabilities such as are always incurred in trade. Under these circumstances it was felt that the Zola translations, being a valuable property, could not be entirely sacrificed. The undertaking given in court was interpreted in the sense previously indicated, and, though the books

were absolutely

<sup>1</sup> In various instances Vizetelly & Co. had acquired its interest in Zola's works from third parties who had bought the rights direct from the author. In some cases, under the law of that time, the copyrights had lapsed; and anybody could issue translations of the books so circumstanced. This will explain the circulation of several of the American versions in England. However Vizetelly & Co., as soon as practicable, put things on such a basis as to protect all Zola's new books, purchasing the sole British rights from him or from his assigns. At the outset Zola received moderate sums; later, after Ernest Vizetelly and Messrs. Ohatto had taken his interests in hand, the payments rose considerably. In America a royalty of fifteen per cent was usually paid, Zola taking two-thirds and E. Vizetelly one-third of it.